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ABSTRACT

Low self-esteem frequently impedes students' academic achievement. By incorporating different learning and teaching strategies, this practicum attempted to build self-esteem for fifth grade students who exhibited low self-esteem. Participants were selected based on their attendance, academic achievement, and/or behavior. The writer incorporated activities that promoted cooperative learning, parental involvement, and counseling for the students. Class instruction was designed to target low self-esteem students which allowed them to use their individual interests and learning styles for academic achievement. The researcher employed different strategies such as giving low self-esteem students leading roles in class plays, involving all parents in the classroom rather than just the guardians of the study participants, and developing class cooperative groups to build self-esteem. Results indicated that classroom behavior, attendance, and academic achievement improved for the study group. A self-report questionnaire revealed that the students' self esteem also improved. The researcher considered parent involvement as critical in developing a positive self-esteem for some students. Four colored graphs represent the practicum's results. Four appendices provide forms for student records as well as a copy of the self-esteem survey. Contains 17 references. (RJM)

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ED 375 363

Building a Good Self-Esteem for Certain Fifth Grade Children Through Cooperative Learning, Individualized Learning Techniques, Parental Involvement, and Student Counseling.

by

Mary D. Tanksley

Cluster 58

A Practicum I Report Presented to the
Ed. D. Program in Child and Youth Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

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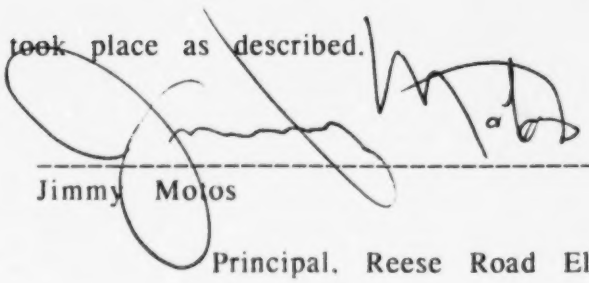
Verifier: 

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This practicum report was submitted by Mary D. Tanksley under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

June 30, 1994

Date of Final Approval of Report

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June S. Delano, Ph.D., Adviser

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ABSTRACT

Building a Good Self-Esteem for Certain Fifth Grade Childlren Through Cooperative Learning, Individualized Learning Techniques, Parental Involvement, and Student Counseling. Tanksley, Mary D., 1994: Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Classroom Teacher/Multiculture Team/Technology Committee/Reading Program Coordinator.

This practicum was designed to build self-esteem for certain fifth grade students who exhibited a low self-esteem through the use of different learning and teaching strategies. Students were selected based on their attendance, academic achievement, and/or behavior as these traits often reflect self-esteem.

The writer incorporated activities that promoted cooperative learning, parental involvement, and counseling for the students. Class instruction was designed to target low self-esteem students which allowed them to use their individual interests and learning styles for academic achievement.

Analysis of the data revealed that classroom behavior improved for the low self-esteem students, as well as attendance and academic achievement. According to a self-report questionnaire, the self-esteem of the students improved also.

* * * * * * * *

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

The community in which this practicum took place is located in one of the southeastern states. It is one of the industrial communities which has the influence of a military base. The city is one that lends itself to employment to the surrounding counties. The population of 175,000 makes it one of the leading cities of the state.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The work setting of the writer is an elementary school. The facility is a building that consists of classrooms, cafeteria/auditorium, media center, storage room, bath rooms, offices, stage, and a clinic. The building is equipped to serve the orthopedic handicapped.

The facility is one of 39 elementary public schools and serves the children of the community. The average income of the family ranges from middle to upper level. The school enjoys the benefit of a

very active Parent Teacher Association (PTA) which provides many funds for needed instructional materials.

The school population consists of students, teachers, administrators, bus drivers, custodians, and food and service personnel. There are 23 classroom teachers, one principal, one part-time assistant principal, and three itinerant teachers. Special services are provided by a part-time school psychologist and a part-time counselor.

The student population of the school is 530 pupils. The racial makeup of the student body is 75% Caucasian, 15% African American, and 10% others. Students are transported to school by their parents and the county school buses. Most of the African Americans, 70 students, are transported to school by bus. Thirty students are transported from local areas that exceed the two-mile walking distant limit. Two students are transported on a special bus equipped to serve the orthopedic handicapped.

The role of the practitioner is that of a classroom teacher. The writer has a self-contained class and teaches mathematics, science, social studies, and language arts. Other duties are designated by the principal and assistant principal.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

Certain children in fifth grade did not exhibit a good self-esteem. For some low self-esteem students, the absentee rate was higher than that of their classmates. Others were more frequently disciplined for classroom misbehavior when compared to the students who exemplified a good self-esteem. Also, academic achievement as reflected in grade point averages lagged behind for some students.

Problem Documentation

The evidence that supported the existence of low self-esteem could be seen in certain children. The average absentee rate for the students in fifth grade was about three days per school year; for certain students in fifth grade the average was 11 days.

Behavior was another area in which children with low self-

esteem exhibited a problem. The average student had never been sent to the office for disciplinary actions, but some students averaged three disciplinary actions per year by the principal.

Academic success and high academic achievement were other areas which low self-esteem children did not fair as well. The grade point average for most children who exhibited a low self-esteem was 3.2. Other students earned a 3.7 grade point average.

Causative Analysis

There were several possible causes of low self-esteem. One cause was that students, over the years, developed poor self-concepts of themselves. Some children in the fifth grade class of the writer earned lower grade point averages than their classmates. Some students who did not perform well academically developed a low self-esteem. When students felt that they were academically inferior to others, it lowered their self-esteem.

Academic success could be hindered by individual learning styles. Students learned in different ways. When the individual learning styles of the students were not addressed, it hindered the academic progress of the student. Some students with low self-esteem seemed to have trouble staying on task. They were easily distracted and were in constant motion. They participated in oral discussions and group activities but never or seldom completed written assignments. The individual learning styles of these kinetic learners had not been properly addressed, thus creating conditions which stimulated negative feelings.

Other students did not participate in group discussions at all.

When students were reluctant to express their opinions in given situations, they missed the opportunity to feel a sense of belonging. These students seemed to feel that they had nothing of value to offer the group. When students did not voice their opinion, they seemed to withdraw from other classroom activities as well. A lack of participation in classroom discussions promoted a poor self-esteem for some students.

Parents and the classroom teacher had to communicate effectively so that the child knew what was expected of him/her by his/her teacher and parents. When teachers did not communicate with the parents effectively, students did not feel that their parents were involved in their learning. The writer felt that it was the responsibility of the teacher to get parents actively involved in the child's learning process. A lack of parental involvement seemed to hamper a positive self-esteem for some children.

Absenteeism and poor behavior were indicators that a child might have a poor self-esteem. Poor academic work seemed to perpetuate a low self-esteem.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

Literature on self-esteem and its relationship to academic success was evident. Students who dropped out of school generally exhibited a low self-esteem. A Potential Dropout Profile was administered to students, and it was found that students with the potential to drop out of school exhibited a low self-esteem (Ruben, 1989). They were also absent from school more frequently than

others. One of the first signs of potential school dropout was high absenteeism in the elementary grades.

Students who were absent more frequently than others showed signs of a low self-image. These pupils who were more often absent from school, scored lower on the Self-Perception Profile for Adolescents (Hagborg, et al., 1991). The examiners concluded that if the absentee rate was an indicator of middle school dropout, then at the elementary grade level, it was important to improve school attendance by promoting a positive self-esteem.

Behavior became a problem for students when it interfered with academic performance. Often the teacher felt that she/he did not get the cooperation needed from parents to improve student behavior.

Behavior was also an indicator or poor self-esteem. Inappropriate behavior in a classroom setting was displayed in certain students (Dunn, Giannitti, Murray, Rossi, Geisert, & Quinn, 1989). A child's misbehavior was often a symptom of low self-esteem. When a child acted out consistently, he usually did not feel good about himself/herself. To improve a student's self-esteem would seem to improve his/her classroom behavior. Therefore, the writer sought out means to improve self-esteem as an avenue for improved student behavior.

Mitchum (1991) reported negative behavior in 22 fifth grade Navy children who manifested a low self-esteem based on findings in Form A of the Self-Esteem Inventory by Stanley Coopersmith. The study of how attitude affected a positive self-esteem in drug related

behavior was conducted using student responses on Pre-and-Post Test Questions Regarding School/Drug Related Attitudes (Miller, 1981). A positive self-esteem at the elementary level seemed to play a key role in the decision making process.

Some researchers reported that there may be a relationship between self-esteem and anxiety. When children frequently showed anxiety in their behavior, it interfered with learning. Matthews and Odom (1989) used the SRA Achievement Series, the Lorge-Thorndike Intelligence Test, the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory, and the State-Trait-Anxiety Inventory for Children to show that there might be a relationship between anxiety and self-esteem.

High absenteeism and inappropriate classroom behavior were indicators of low self-esteem. Poor academic work, however, was not only an indicator but might also affect the students' self-esteem. Certain children consistently felt that they had nothing positive to offer the group (Ruben, 1989). When children did not participate in group activities or class activities, they did not share in the learning process as much as the ones who do participate. Group participation also promoted a positive self-esteem.

Individual learning styles of certain children had not been properly addressed (Dunn, Giannitti, Murray, Rossi, Geisert, & Quinn, 1989). Children learned by varying means. Often when a child's learning style had not been taken into consideration when a teacher planned and taught, the child did not learn as well. This was true especially when the child's learning style was in contrast to the teacher's instructional style. For a child to be academically

successful, it was important that class lessons lend themselves to his/her individual learning styles.

The Self-Appraisal Inventory and Personal Background Data Sheet were used by Alston and Williams (1982) in determining that African American boys without the presence of a father in the home exhibited a low self-esteem. Children did not feel accepted and did not take on the attributes of the group, thus, they did not feel a sense of belonging, pride, and strength as reported from informal case studies by Cowan and Clover (1991). How a student felt about himself/herself, might be a factor in whether he/she was involved in criminal activity. A self-designed instrument was used to evaluate how a poor self-esteem might be related to juvenile delinquency, poor school performance, and psychological depression (Rosenbuer, Schooler, & Schoenbacek, 1989). Poor school performance could be seen as a key factor in low self-esteem for many elementary students.

Significant others in a person's life played an important role in developing a positive self-esteem for children. Juhasz (1989) used a paper-and-pencil questionnaire to elicit a list of important persons who played a significant role in the development of self-esteem in an individual's life. Thus, how other important people felt about the child influenced the way the child felt about himself/herself. Significant others included parents, siblings, peers, and teachers. Therefore, in developing a positive self-esteem for certain students in the classroom, activities that encompassed significant others would be included. It was the writer's feeling that academic excellence

might be accomplished through the involvement of significant others in the student's academic work.

Wolfe (1985) reported on the results of children's self-esteem when they were given an opportunity to make selections. He noted that students' selections from a list of class choices illustrated that a healthy self-image was a vital aspect in the development of a positive self-esteem. To build self-esteem for certain students in the classroom, students would be given the opportunities to select activities from a class choice.

The literature on self-esteem showed that it was important for children to exhibit a good self-esteem in the classroom. When they did not, their academic performance might be seriously damaged. Absenteeism and poor behavior were indicators of poor self-esteem. Poor academic performance might build a low self-image, thus, promoting a poor self-esteem.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The writer established the following goals and expectations for this practicum:

Certain children in fifth grade would exhibit a good self-esteem. Their school attendance would be appropriate when compared to other students and their behavior would be appropriate for a classroom setting. Also, these students would improve in their academic course work. The writer proposed the following goals and outcomes:

Expected Outcomes

The writer proposed the following outcomes:

(1) Four out of five students will improve their attendance records by one day per marking period. A Student Attendance Record will be used to make the comparison from the previous year (see Appendix A).

(2) Three out of five students will improve their behavior by reducing the number of times they are sent to the office for disciplinary actions from three times to one time when compared to the marking periods in 1992-93 school year. The disciplinary action records kept by the school principal will be used to make these comparison. These comparisons will reflect the same time frame for the previous school year (see Appendix B).

(3) Four out of five under achievers will raise their grade point average by one letter grade per marking period as shown on their report card records. Report card records will be used to compare grades that students achieve during the time of the practicum. These records will be used to compare and report academic performance for the previous year at the same marking periods (Appendix C).

(4) Three out of five students will demonstrate high self-esteem as indicated by a score of 85 on the self-esteem survey (see Appendix D).

Measurement of Outcomes

For Outcome 1, the Student Attendance Records were used as a measuring device. The student's attendance was compared with his/her attendance for the same time frame from the previous school year. The attendance record was divided and recorded in two six-week marking periods (see Appendix A). Days absent were tabulated for the two six-weeks period and compared to the corresponding two six-weeks periods of the previous year.

For Outcome 1, four out of five students improved their attendance record by one day per marking period.

Disciplinary Action Records were used as an instrument to measure results for Outcome 2. Disciplinary actions taken by the school principal were kept on file for each student. The disciplinary action recorded by the school principal was used to make comparisons to show whether improvement had taken place. These comparisons reflected the same time frame for the previous school year (Appendix B). Four of the five students were not sent to the office for disciplinary actions.

Outcome 3 was measured by using the student report card records. Grades on the report card from the previous year were used to compare grades that students achieved during the time of the practicum. The same two corresponding six-week reporting periods were used. These records showed comparisons and indicated academic performance for the previous year corresponding with the time of the practicum (see Appendix C). Three of the five students improved their academic scores by at least one letter grade per marking period.

For Outcome 4, a self-esteem survey was used to determine if the students exhibited a good self-esteem at the end of the practicum period (Appendix D). Three of the five students reported scores of 85% or above on the self-report.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

Some students in fifth grade did not exhibit a positive self-esteem. Several solutions to the problem have been studied. One researcher reported that some fifth grade students were given the opportunity to explore subjects of special interest in a unique setting. The program "TechTivities" offered students class choices in small group settings to build imagination and creativity. Wolfe (1985) reported that a healthy self-image through small group activities allowed the students to become more sensitive to the world around them. The writer felt that when students became sensitive to the world around them, they would present fewer behavior problems in the classroom, thus improving their self-image.

In Ruben's (1989) report on the concern of high school drop-outs and behavior, he noted "it is not students' background but schools' response to students' background that determines students'

success in school." He thus designed a "Success in School" program which endorsed a preventive measure to school drop-out and poor behavior. School programs that helped to foster a good self-esteem paved the way to improving self-esteem. Programs designed to prevent classroom behavior by responding to the students' background benefited the students in the fifth grade class of the writer.

Another area to improve behavior was journal writing. Journal writing, based on personal experiences on a daily or weekly basis, provided an opportunity for students to reflect upon different aspects of their self-concepts (Borba, 1989). Borba provided a list of sentence starters that students chose as subjects. She found that giving students an opportunity to write about personal experiences helped them to learn more about themselves, thus, enhancing self-esteem. The writer felt that students should be given an opportunity to reflect upon their different self-concept aspects. They then became aware of the positive aspects of themselves, thus, improving behavioral attitudes.

Albert (1992) stated that the ultimate goal of the behavior or misbehavior of a student was to achieve a feeling of belonging. Students needed to belong. They needed to feel significant and important to the people around them. In school, students wanted to feel capable of completing a job that met the school standards. They wanted to be able to connect with their peers and teachers. Also, they wanted to be able to make significant contributions to the school setting. Allowing fifth grade students to achieve a feeling of

belonging, helped eliminate behavior problems.

Poor academic performance was another area that affected one's self-esteem. Several ways of combatting poor academic performance was evident in the literature. Cooperative learning was one alternative to individual failure according to Hagborg et al., (1991). Researchers of current literature concluded that retention has few benefits, if any. In fact, in many instances, there were more disadvantages than advantages. Grade retention often fostered a poor self-esteem. Thus, Hagborg et al. reported that educators should consider alternatives, such as cooperative learning, to improve learning for students.

A research study by Miller (1988) showed that educational achievements were influenced by self-concept. He thus concluded that "prevention/early intervention" programs for children should be designed to enhance their self-esteem. Miller reported that activities to implement and reinforce positive self-esteem should be part of the prevention/early intervention process.

Researchers have examined possible solutions to low self-esteem. Cowan and Clover (1991) believed that therapeutic value existed in tactile experience. Through the disciplines of fine arts, children were able to express themselves in a non-threatening manner. Students who sometimes were not as strong in academic areas, were able to share with their classmates ideas and solutions to given problem. This, according to Cowan and Clover (1991), added a boost to their self-esteem. Giving fifth grade students an opportunity to work in a non-threatening atmosphere, improved the

self-esteem of the individuals.

Group counseling was administered to 22 fifth grade children whose Navy fathers were on deployment cycles. It was found that these children's self-esteem was affected by the absence of their fathers. Group counseling was reported to be an effective intervention (Mitchum, 1991) for these fifth grade students.

Borba (1989) reported that there are five feelings referred to as esteem building blocks. These blocks were identified as security, selfhood, affiliation, mission, and competence. Borba reported that the student who possessed a high level of security conveyed a sense of assuredness. This student felt safe and comfortable in his/her environment. A strong sense of selfhood described the student who had self-knowledge. This student had a sense of who he is, his roles in life, as well as his attributes and physical characteristics. Affiliation was another key building block which described the connectedness and belonging that an individual felt. The building block, mission, described the individual's ability to be responsible for his/her own actions and control over his/her own life. Finally, a competent student was described as one who generally felt successful and capable. This student knew his strengths and could accept his weaknesses. According to Borba (1989) these key building blocks were particularly helpful in determining the level of self-esteem. The writer used these building blocks in activities designed to build a positive self-esteem for certain fifth graders.

Mitchell and McCollum (1992) discussed four factors affecting the development of self-esteem. The treatment and the amount of

respect received from significant others were key in the development of a good self-esteem. The successes and the position one held were important to the way a person felt about himself. The aspirations and the ability to live up to the aspirations that an individual desired had a definite impact on the self-esteem of that individual. Demeaning actions by others or devaluation was inevitable. Thus, the ability to cope successfully became an important element to a good self-esteem.

Pairing a "shy" student with a responsive student was a technique used to give the shy student practice with social skills (Limbardo & Radl, 1982). Frequently an overzealous student worked well with a shy student in helping to build the shy student's self-esteem. The shy student was given the opportunity to interact with an individual who did not possess the same fears. It was important that shy students be given the opportunity to overcome these fears in a non-threatening atmosphere.

Description of Selected Solution

After the writer reviewed the literature, there were several ideas to a solution that were striking. Some that the practitioner found to be helpful included interest group activities, fine arts, cooperative learning groups, and lessons that addressed individual learning styles. Parents were described as significant others in the lives of children, therefore, activities to get parents involved were included in the solution process. Finally, through journal writing and other related activities that would promote selfhood, security,

affiliation, mission, and competence were included.

Possible solutions that were attainable in the classroom setting provided a wide range for the practitioner. The writer incorporated interest activities, cooperative learning groups, individual learning style activities, journal writing through experiences, and self-esteem building. Also, experiences that involved the fine arts, tactile experiences, parental interaction, and after school counseling, were beneficial to the practicum.

As a fine arts activity, the students were given an opportunity to present a play. The students with low-self esteem were assigned key roles. The practitioner felt that these children would feel a sense of belonging. According to Cowan & Clover (1991) a child who had a sense of affiliation felt bonded or identified with a group. The play provided a sense of bonding and affiliation for the low self-esteem children.

Cooperative group learning provided children an opportunity to work in a small group setting. Therefore, cooperative groups were used to place low self-esteem students with students who exhibited a good self-esteem. Science activities provided good interaction among students. (Cowan & Clover, 1991).

Students with low self-esteem were given the opportunity to "choose" an activity which he/she wished to employ. According to Wolfe (1985) when students were given an opportunity to select an area of interest, they were more successful in accomplishing the task.

Getting parents involved in the educational development of their children was most important to the students (Juhasz, 1989).

The parents of low self-esteem students were contacted to discuss how they could become involved in classroom related projects.

Counseling with students and parents achieved success in developing a positive self-esteem. As needed, students with low self-esteem were given an opportunity to have a friendly "chat" after school with the teacher. Also, counseling sessions were arranged on a regular basis with the low self-esteem child, teacher, and parents in attendance (Mitchum, 1991).

Report of Action Taken

A twelve week detailed program to build self-esteem for identified students included integrated approaches to learning. Cooperative learning groups, journal writing, fine arts, interest group activities, parental involvement, activities promoting individual learning styles, tactile experiences, and self-esteem building block activities were part of the development procedure.

To promote esteem building through written experiences, low self-esteem students selected topics to write journal entries for one week (Borba, 1989). A list of twenty starter sentences were distributed to the identified students. They used these sentences to begin their writing. A second and a third list were given on subsequent days. Students chose from any of the three lists, fifty choices, to continue with their journal writing. Students were allowed to used these sentence starters in their journal writing throughout the year. Other students in the class asked to participate.

To build a feeling of belonging and affiliation, the student with

low self-esteem was paired with a more responsive student to read and discuss a story. The pairing gave both students an opportunity to interact under positive circumstances. It took about a week to read the short novel giving the pair time to communicate.

To give students with low self-esteem an opportunity to interact with others and to exercise different learning styles, the class was divided into six cooperative groups to do a unit on essential nutrients and a balanced diet (Curriculum Guide: Fifth Grade, 1992). Strategies for organizing a cooperative team were employed, and the teacher assigned duties for each person on the team with special attention given to the students who displayed a low self-esteem. Each group used available resources in the library and classroom to review the basic four food groups with special assistance given to the students with low self-esteem. Pictures from magazines were used to make posters representing each food group. After reviewing the basic food groups, each cooperative group selected a name for its group. The student with the low self-esteem made the name selection for the group: protein, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins, minerals, and water.

Students used construction paper to make decorative name tags (representing the name of the assigned nutrient) for their group and displayed it near their tables. Each group researched the specific functions of the assigned nutrient. Students listened to the nutrition song (Harstick, 1977) and sang along until they were familiar with the lyrics.

Students were evaluated and encouraged to continue to work

in cooperative groups which helped low self-esteem members as they continued to explore the nutrients in food. Each group did an exercise which determine the presence of protein, starch, sugar, fats, and/or vitamins in a variety of foods.

To evaluate students, each group used a class period to demonstrate to others in the class on how to determine the presence of a particular nutrient in a variety of foods. Each group discussed the disorders associated with malnutrition of the particular nutrient.

Each individual made contributions to the lesson by writing questions and answers for a "nutrition board game", thus, the low self-esteem students contributed and felt that they belonged. Students with low self-esteem worked with their classmates in using books and other references to write questions on index cards with the corresponding answers written on the back.

Low self-esteem students were matched with other students to play the game in small groups. The game was played using the questions/answers and the game boards in the classroom. Students rotated until they had played each game: protein, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins, minerals, and water. After each student was given the opportunity to play each game, the low self-esteem students were given a written self-check quiz to help him/her focus on the objectives.

Students built affiliation through tutoring by reviewing the presence of certain nutrients in food in a non-threatening manner which benefited students with low self-esteem. By playing games, students reviewed the presence of certain nutrients in food. Students

reviewed the deficiency disorders associated with certain nutrients. Students were re-tested on the essential nutrients and a balanced diet.

Using the fine arts to promote creativity in developing a positive self-esteem, the class was divided into two groups to perform a play with low self-esteem students playing key roles. Students read the play and decided which roles they preferred to act. The students with low self-esteem were given their choices first. And finally, students were grouped to decide on how the props should be made. Costumes and invitations were also designed by the groups.

Giving low self-esteem students key roles in a live production was most effective. At the time of the play, these students were rarely absent. The class received the best attendance award for the month with a 98.7% attendance rate. The students kept the banner in their classroom for the next two months. Giving low-self-esteem students responsibility improved attendance and added a boost to their esteem.

To give low self-esteem students an opportunity to identify problems and generate their own solutions (mission), each group decided on costumes, planned stage props, and drew designs for the printed program. Students were encouraged to solicit parent's assistance in making the costumes.

To promote self-esteem building blocks of competence, affiliation, and mission, low self-esteem students and others rehearsed for the performance. Students were given class time to

practice. In preparation for the event, students drew designs for the program and made stage props. Individual students volunteered to bring in the necessary items. The practitioner insured the participation of the identified students. Finally, the students presented the play to their parents and fellow school mates.

To address individual learning styles, and to promote parental involvement, students with low self-esteem were given the opportunity to select an activity to present to the class. Students selected an activity (Wolfe, 1989) from the activity grab bag. The students were encouraged to discuss the activity with their parents. Their parents signed a statement agreeing to come to school when their child made the presentation.

Conferences with low self-esteem pupil, their parents, and teacher were arranged to get parents (significant others) involved and interested in the activity in which their child had chosen. Parents were encouraged to assist their child with his/her project. During the week, students were given class time to discuss the progress of their projects and to get additional help if needed.

Individual learning styles and interests were addressed when giving low self-esteem students the opportunity to present projects by showing, telling, illustrating, demonstrating, and/or turning in a written assignment. Parents were invited to attend during the day of their child's presentation. Therefore, a tentative schedule was sent to parents and readjusted as needed to meet their individual work schedules. Students who preferred to do written assignments turned them in at this time.

At the end of the practicum experience, a self-esteem inventory, reflecting how students felt about themselves, was administered to students who originally exhibited a low self-esteem.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

Certain students had developed a poor self-esteem by the time they reached fifth grade. Some of these students tend to be absent more frequently than their peers; some were disciplined more for misbehavior; and others did not obtain the academic success as their classmates. Cooperative learning, counseling, parental involvement, and individualized learning techniques were strategies used to resolve the problem.

Outcome 1 of the practicum was to improve student attendance. The student's attendance was compared with his/her attendance record for the same time frame for the previous school year. The attendance record was divided and recorded in two six-week marking periods (see Appendix A). Days absent were tabulated for the two six-weeks period and compared to the

corresponding two six-weeks periods of the previous year. Four of the five students showed an improvement in their attendance rate by one day for each of the two marking periods. Student C did not show a serious attendance problem in 1993 but exhibited other low self-esteem traits. The graph in Figure 1 shows the improvement of student attendance during the practicum in 1994 compared to the same time in 1993.

For Outcome 2, four of five students were not sent to the office for disciplinary actions. This was an improvement for three students. A Student Disciplinary Record was kept to record actions taken during the practicum period (Appendix B). The graph in Figure 2 shows a comparison of the number of times the students were sent to the office for disciplinary actions in 1993 for the two six-week periods and the 1994 corresponding two six-week periods.

For Outcome 3, three of the five students improved their academic scores by one letter grade compared to the 1993 two six-week periods. Student Grade Report Record (Appendix C) was tabulated to show comparison for the students. The graph in Figure 3 shows the results of this comparison.

For Outcome 4, students were given a self-report questionnaire (Appendix D) to determine if students had a good self esteem. A high score of 85% was indicative of a good self-esteem. Three of five students scored 85% or above on the self-report (Figure 4).

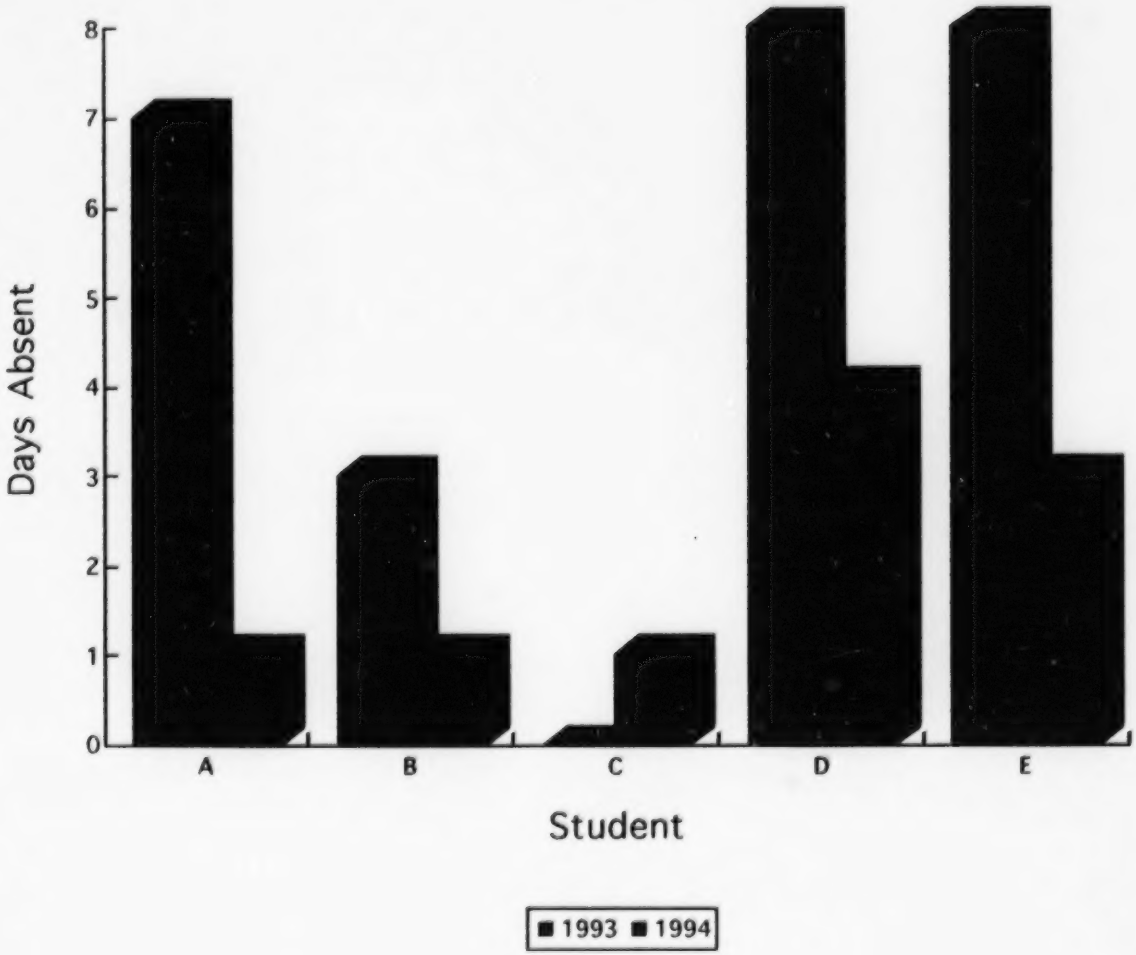

Figure 1. Student absentee report comparison for the 4th six-weeks and 5th six-weeks grading periods for 1993 and 1994.

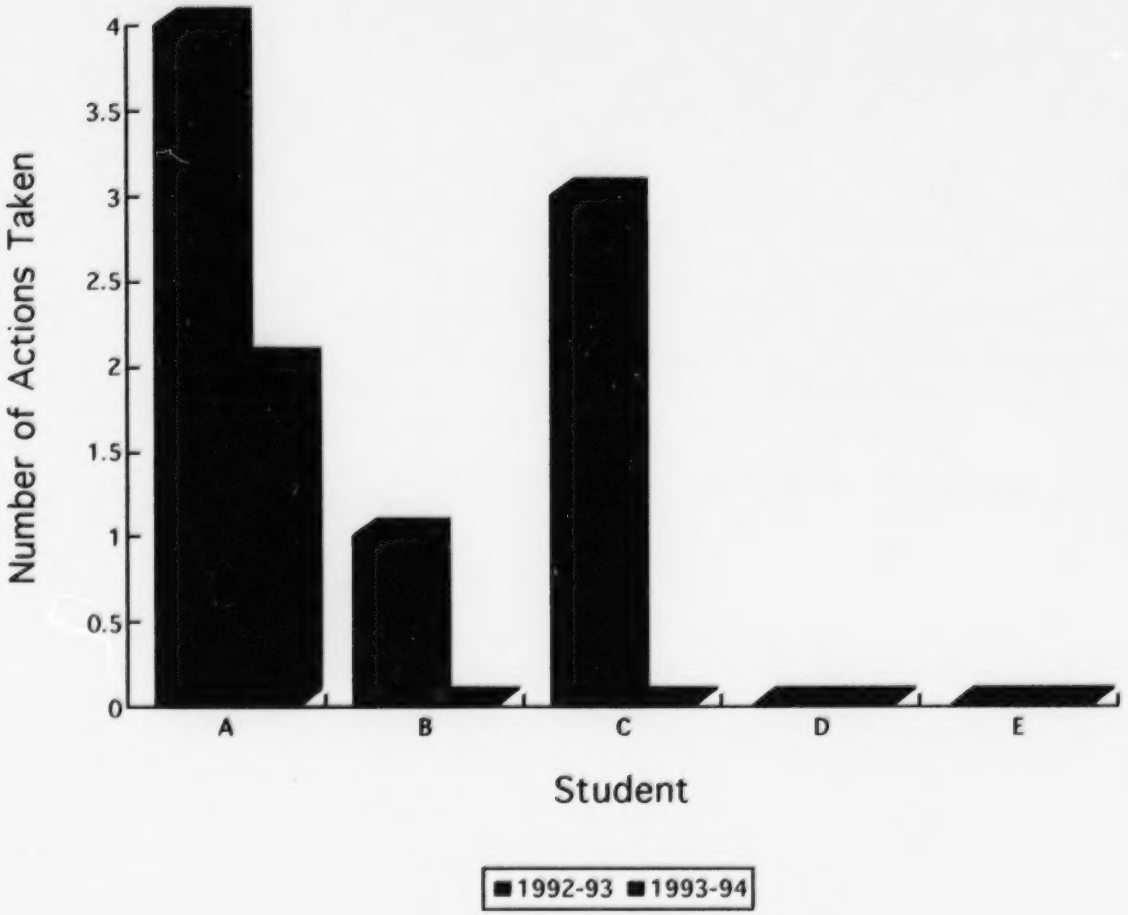

Figure 2. Disciplinary actions required during the 4th and 5th six-week grading periods for 1992-93 school year compared to 1993-94 school year.

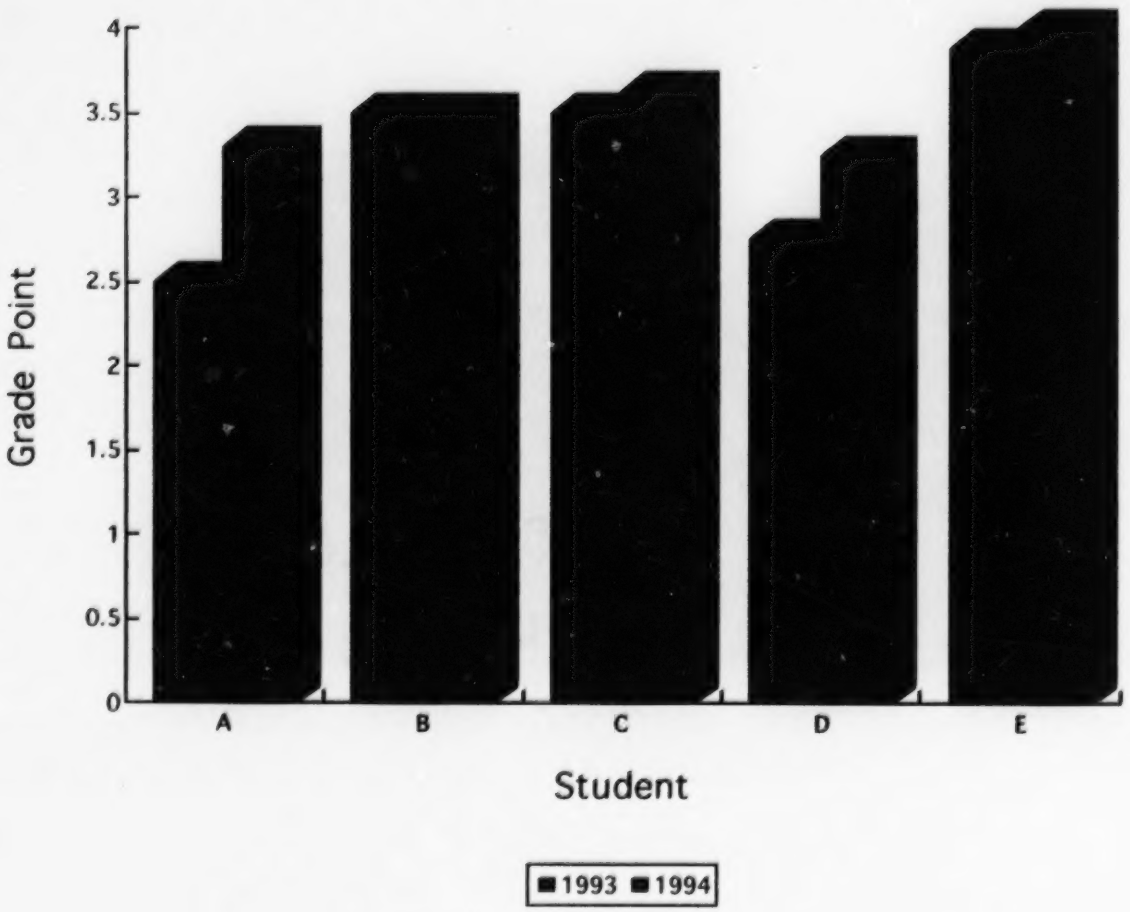

Figure 3. A comparison of student grade point average for the 4th six-weeks and 5th six-weeks grading periods for the years1993 and 1994 schools.

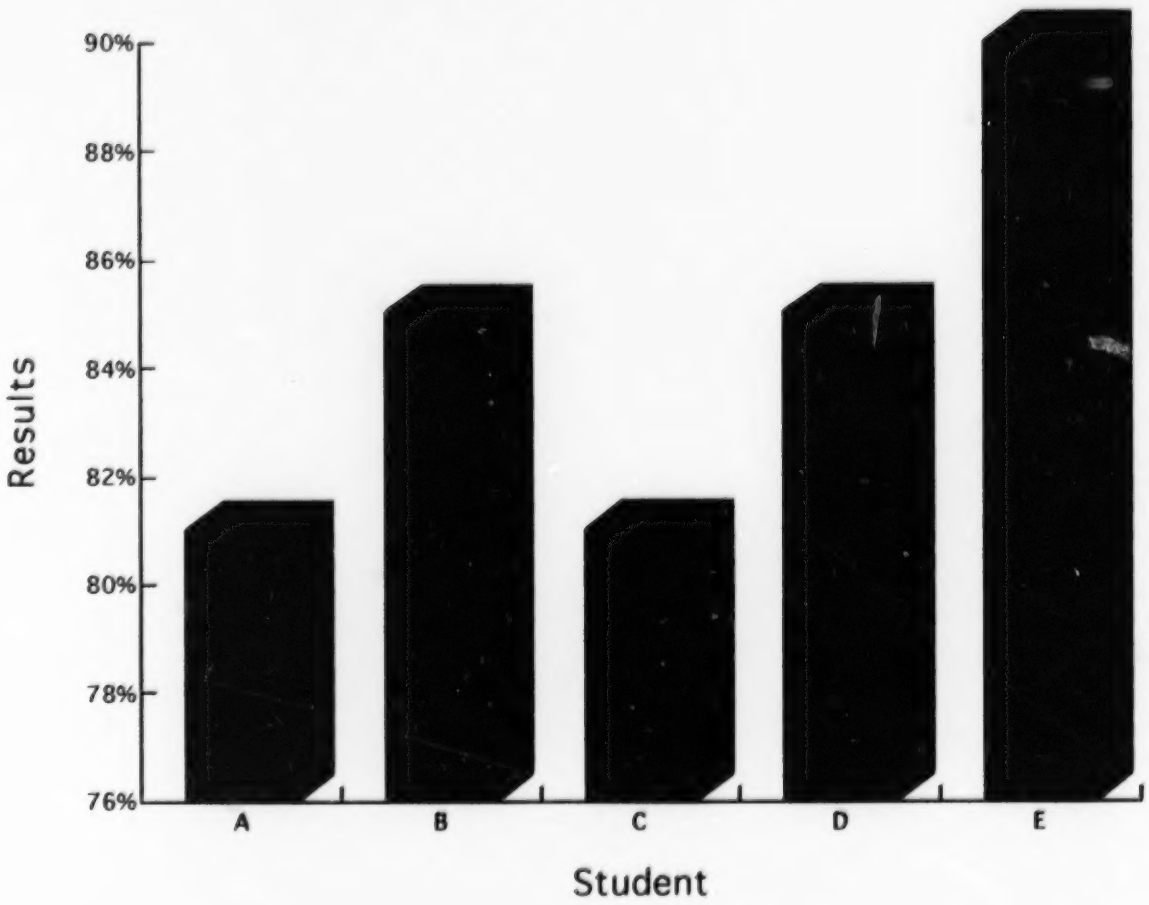

Figure 4. Results of a self-report questionnaire on self-esteem administered to students at the end of the practicum experience.

Discussion

Building a good self-esteem for students has become a problem for many teachers in today's classrooms. Teachers have felt that with improved self-esteem, children would be more interested in learning, thus, improving teaching conditions and classroom environment. The writer proposed to build self-esteem for certain fifth grade students in hopes of improving the learning conditions for these students. With a good self-esteem, students were expected to improve in many school related areas such as attendance, behavior, and academic performance.

The practicum experience was a success in that the identified students showed positive change in the four areas of concern - attendance, behavior, academic improvement, and self-esteem. Each student showed progress in at least three of the four areas.

Recommendations

In building a good self-esteem for identified students, one must be cautious when singling out students. Certain students were identified by the practitioner as having a low self-esteem, but some assignments could not be singled out for those students. For example, originally only low self-esteem students were given journal topics to make journal entries. However, the entire class was given the opportunity to use the journal topics that were designed for low self-esteem students after it expressed its interest.

Getting parents involved was another problem for the practitioner. When the parents of the identified students were called

to help with the play, they presented many excuses. They too, could not be isolated. To correct this problem, the practitioner called all parents and invited them to participate in the next lesson, which was the individual "grab bag" activities. Their child's presentation was scheduled around the parents' time. The parents of 24 out of 27 students participated. All of the identified students' parents were present. When trying to get parents involved, it may be necessary to involve all parents to get to the ones needed.

Building positive self-esteem in the classroom had many benefits for the practitioner and the students as well. Getting to know the parents was one such benefit. Parent /teacher conferences with students in attendance contributed to the success of the practicum. At this particular school, parents are called in for conferences only when the child is misbehaving or having academic problems. Because this tends to only lower self-esteem for the identified students, the teacher decided to have conferences with all parents. All the parents of the identified students attended the conferences, and positive accomplishments were discussed. The identified students did not get negative feelings for having their parents come in for a conference. Parent involvement is critical in developing a positive self-esteem for some students.

Dissemination

This practicum report will be shared with other teachers and administrators in the school district through staff development courses.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

STUDENT ATTENDANCE RECORD

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STUDENT ATTENDANCE RECORD

x = absent

First Six Weeks of Practicum

Student	Days 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
A																														
B																														
C																														
D																														
E																														

Second Six Weeks of Practicum

Student	Days 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
A																														
B																														
C																														
D																														
E																														

APPENDIX B

STUDENT DISCIPLINARY RECORD

Student Disciplinary Record

First Six Weeks of Practicum (Comparison)

Student	A	B	C	D	E
1992-93					
1993-94					

Second Six Weeks of Practicum (Comparison)

Student	A	B	C	D	E
1992-93					
1993-94					

Number represents the times that the students were sent to the principal's office.

APPENDIX C

STUDENT ACADEMIC REPORT RECORD

Student Academic Report Record

First Six Weeks of Practicum (Comparison)

Social Studies 1992-93/93-94	Language Arts 1992-93/93-94	Mathematics 1992-93/93-94	Science 1992-93/94

Student

A				
B				
C				
D				
E				

Second Six Weeks of Practicum (Comparison)

Social Studies 1992-93/93-94	Language Arts 1992-93/93-94	Mathematics 1992-93/93-94	Science 1992-93/93

Student

A				
B				
C				
D				
E				

APPENDIX D

SELF-ESTEEM SURVEY

How are you feeling today?

Circle the best answer.		Always	Sometime	Never
1.	I like myself.	A	S	N
2.	I like my family.	A	S	N
3.	My family treats me kind.	A	S	N
4.	I have a friend that I can always count on.	A	S	N
5.	I love my teacher.	A	S	N
6.	I like playing outside.	A	S	N
7.	I like meeting new people.	A	S	N
8.	I feel good when I make good grades.	A	S	N
9.	I feel important.	A	S	N
10.	My parents set too many rules.	A	S	N
11.	I like to play with my friends.	A	S	N
12.	I like my neighborhood.	A	S	N
13.	I forgive when someone treats me mean.	A	S	N
14.	I have a favorite place to go to relax.	A	S	N
15.	My friends make me happy.	A	S	N

16.	I think I know what I would like to do when I grow up.	A	S	N
17.	The teacher likes me.	A	S	N
18.	School work is easy for me.	A	S	N
19.	School is fun.	A	S	N
20.	I feel scared.	A	S	N
21.	I like doing my best work.	A	S	N
22.	I am a good student.	A	S	N
23.	I have a lot of friends.	A	S	N
24.	My teacher understands me.	A	S	N
25.	I am proud of my family.	A	S	N
26.	I like to help people.	A	S	N
27.	I like pets.	A	S	N
28.	I like to be with friends.	A	S	N
29.	My hair looks awful.	A	S	N
30.	My friends make me laugh.	A	S	N
31.	I feel happy.	A	S	N
32.	I finish whatever I start.	A	S	N
33.	I tell someone when I have a problem.	A	S	N
34.	I am very organized.	A	S	N

35.	My hair is cool.	A	S	N
36.	I like to tell others when I do good in school.	A	S	N
37.	I like to choose what I wear to school.	A	S	N
38.	My parents call me lazy.	A	S	N
39.	I wonder what others are thinking.	A	S	N
40.	My friends tease me.	A	S	N